

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) In a communications system comprising at least two
wireless service areas, each service area being operable to provide wireless communication
service to a Mobile Node (MN) and being interfaced to a data network gateway, and
wherein communications channels are maintained among the at least two service areas, a
 5 method for providing a connection for a data communication signal in a wireless
communication network, between an MN and a data network, the method comprising the
 steps of:

establishing plural communications channels between the MN and a network
 interface at a serving service area network controlling element, a first of the plural channels
 10 being arranged for connection to the data network gateway interface for that service area
 and a second of the plural channels being arranged for connection, via the communication
 channels connecting that service area with another service area, to the data network
 gateway interface for the another service area, the network interface establishing at least
 one communication channel between a served Mobile Node (MN) and at least one other
 15 network controlling element.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of
establishing plural communications channels is implemented in a network interface, and the
network interface associates each accessed and established communication channel with the
 MN and dictates to which service area network controlling element each of the
 5 communication channels is to be routed.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of establishing a ~~network interface at a serving network controlling element~~ plural communications channels further comprises:

5 establishing a multiple of communication channels between the serving service area network controlling element and an MN in accordance with a standard being followed by the communication network;

generating signaling information that associates each established channel to the MN and the serving service area network controlling element; and

10 routing the established communication channels from the serving service area network controlling element to ~~other network controlling elements~~ the another service area based on the signaling information.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~the network is operative to establish a communication channel between the MN and a data network, and further comprising the step of accessing simultaneously multiple data serving nodes~~ are simultaneously accessed by routing communication channels from the serving service area

5 network controlling element to ~~other a network controlling elements~~ element coupled to a corresponding data serving ~~nodes~~ node in the another service area.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~2~~ where the network interface is established by an MN.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~2~~ where the network interface is established by a network controlling element.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 2 where the network interface is established by a data serving node.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ones of the service area network controlling elements are interfaced to a data network via corresponding ones of a plurality of data serving nodes (PDSN) and comprising the additional step of:

performing a handoff between the serving service area network controlling element,
 5 ~~the serving network controlling element being interfaced to a first data serving node, and~~
~~another~~ a network controlling element interfaced to a data network gateway at the another
service area ~~second data serving node~~, whereby, during the handoff, communication
 channels established and accessed at the ~~other~~ network controlling element of the another
service area are routed from ~~the other~~ that network controlling element to the serving
 10 service area network controlling element.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8 where, upon completion of the handoff, the communication channels routed between the serving service area network controlling element and the ~~other~~ network controlling element of the another service area are removed and the MN communicates with the ~~other~~ service area network controlling
 5 element via communication channels established and accessed during the handoff.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is performed in accordance with a standard being followed by the wireless communication network.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is initiated by the serving service area network controlling element.

12. (Original) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is initiated by the
MN.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8 where the handoff is initiated
by a data serving node coupled to the ~~serving~~ service area network controlling element.
